

Controlling Fleas and Ticks in the Yard

Fleas and ticks can be difficult to control but can be managed through Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Various techniques can be used in the yard, in the house, and on the pet.

Conventional insecticides here refer to Dursban, diazinon, and Malathion. Less toxic treatments here refer to pyrethrins, insect growth regulators (IGRs), and limonene. These should be used in combination with sanitation in the yard and on the pet.

Pet Treatment

Often, Pets carry fleas and ticks into yards. Check pets for fleas and ticks if they have been in an infested area. Fleas combs are available for flea removal. Remove ticks with tweezers. If tweezers are not available, protect fingers with a tissue or cloth. Dips, powders, and shampoos are available for fleas and ticks. Do not bathe or dip your pet in household sinks or tubs. Use a tub outside and do not pour the leftover solution down house drains or storm drains.

Pet Bedding

Do not forget to treat the pet bedding. Doghouses, pet baskets, or blankets are great hiding places for fleas and ticks. The bedding should be washed, if possible, in the washing machine. Doghouses can be treated if the insecticide label lists them.

Yard Treatment

Fleas and ticks are normally **not** found where grass is short or in areas of full sun. Grass should be mowed frequently. Trash and plant debris like leaves and wood or stone piles should be removed to eliminate other breeding areas. *Remember* that it is not necessary to treat sunny spots in the yard.

Conventional insecticides for outdoor use are available. Follow label directions. *Do not use more than recommended.* During hot and dry weather, the lawn should be watered before insecticide application. Follow-up treatments may be necessary throughout the season.

New flea control products are available, but before applying check with your county extension agent. Many of the new products, such as beneficial nematodes, have not been fully researched for controlling fleas. The nematodes also do not kill adult fleas. It does not hurt to try new products, but beware they may or may not work like you want.

House Treatment

Make sure there are no fleas and ticks in the house. Only use insecticides listed for indoor use. Observe the waiting period, if the label lists one, before entering the home after a pesticide application. For more information on home treatment, refer to *Flea Control in the Home*.